



Mill Creek Horse Trail Seasonal Closure

Mill Creek boasts one of the most productive coho (silver) salmon streams in California. The majority of coho found within the Smith River spawn and spend their first year growing up within Mill Creek.



A Unique Lifestyle

The Mill Creek Horse Trail crosses the mainstem of Mill Creek at two fords. To protect salmon, horse and foot traffic will not be allowed to cross these fords during the seasonal closure. An alternate route is available. (see map on back).

Coho salmon spawn (make nests and lay eggs) in the shallow gravel areas of each ford. Fishery biologists have discovered that fragile salmon eggs buried in stream gravel can be easily destroyed when humans or horses inadvertently step on them. **A single crossing by a hiker or horse can crush up to 80 percent of the eggs or developing young in a salmon nest** (also known as a redd). Multiple crossings can destroy all life within the redd.

Adult coho and other salmonid species return from the ocean in late fall and early winter when seasonal rains raise the level of Mill

Creek. Adult coho then migrate upstream to a spot that provides the right-sized gravel (pea to fist-sized) and water flow (cool, clean, full of oxygen) to ensure the survival of their young. The right spot usually occurs in the areas between pools of water.

Female coho dig shallow depressions in the gravel, lay eggs, and adult males fertilize them. Both females and males die within a few days to weeks after spawning.

The eggs and developing young fish remain under the gravel for the next few months, usually emerging from the gravel in spring. The young coho then migrate up or downstream to deeper pools to feed and grow. Finally, young coho migrate downstream to the ocean during the following fall, returning to Mill Creek in three to four years as adults to complete the cycle.

Closure: A Good Idea

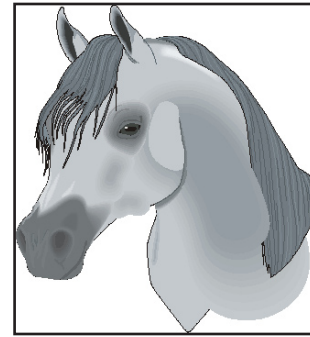
Please help conserve these fish. Do not cross or enter the water at either of the fords during the seasonal closure period—when coho eggs and developing young are present. Your cooperation will ensure that coho salmon will remain in Mill Creek long into the future.

Trail closed between Mill Creek stream crossings annually from:
North ford October 15 to March 31
South ford October 15 to May 31
(See map on the back)

Coho are listed as federally threatened in all the coastal streams of southern Oregon and northern California. Redwood National and State Parks comply with this by giving coho the extra level of protection they warrant.

The Alternative

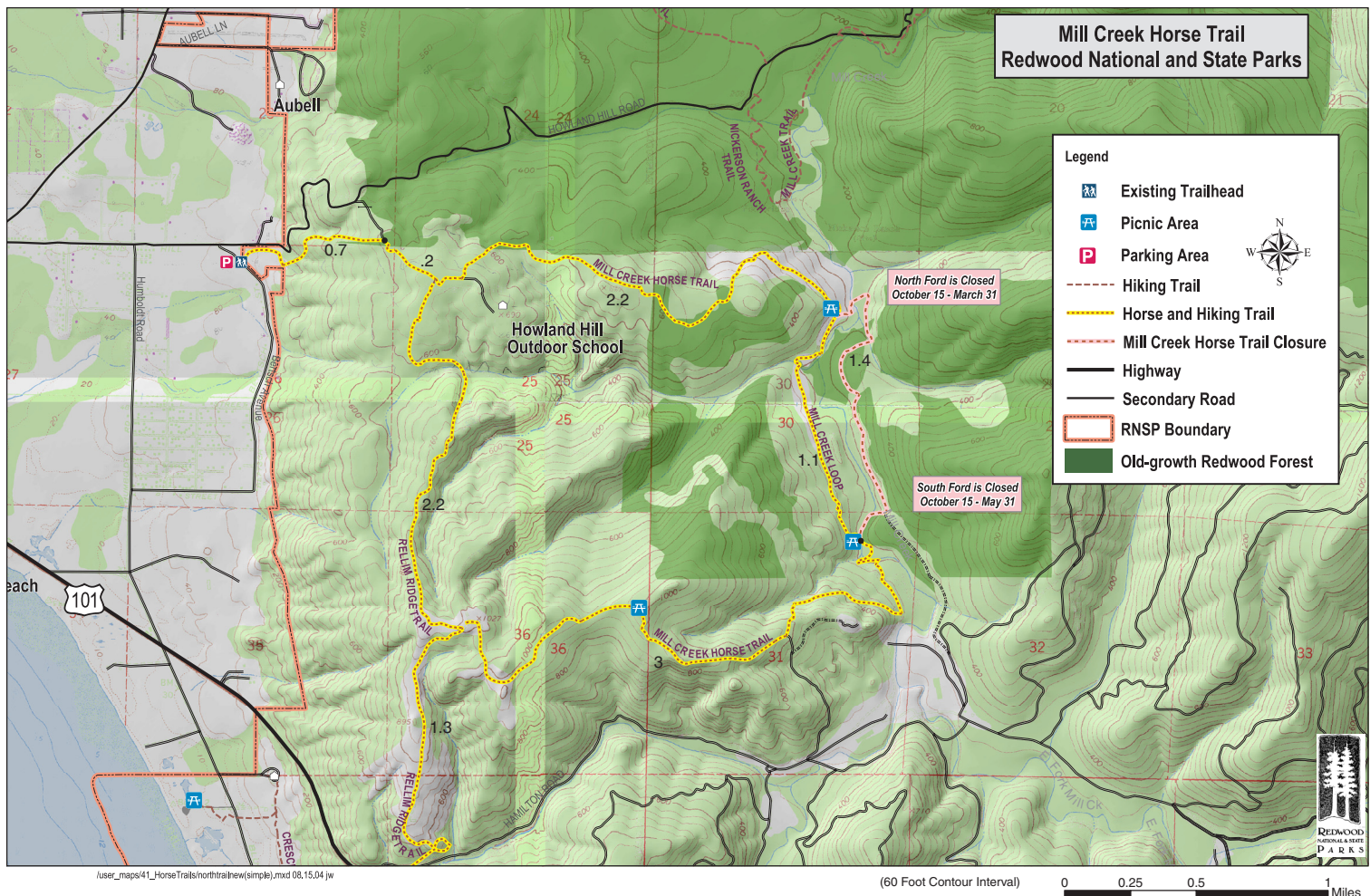
In 2004, a 3-mile trail was completed south of the existing Mill Creek Horse Trail. **You can ride your horses more than nine miles on this loop trail** during the closure and almost 11 miles when both the Mill Creek Loop and the Mill Creek Horse Trail are open. See map below.



Bringing It Home

Think of salmon as an indicator of clean water in your glass. Salmon can only survive in clear, cold, unpolluted waters. Water remains free of sediment when tree roots hold streamside banks in place. The

benefits of clean waterways pour into your glass without extensive filtration processing. Nor do we have to pay for big city processing. Instead, we can choose to save coho salmon.



MILL CREEK HORSE TRAIL IS FOR HIKERS AND HORSES ONLY — NO BIKES OR PETS.

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA